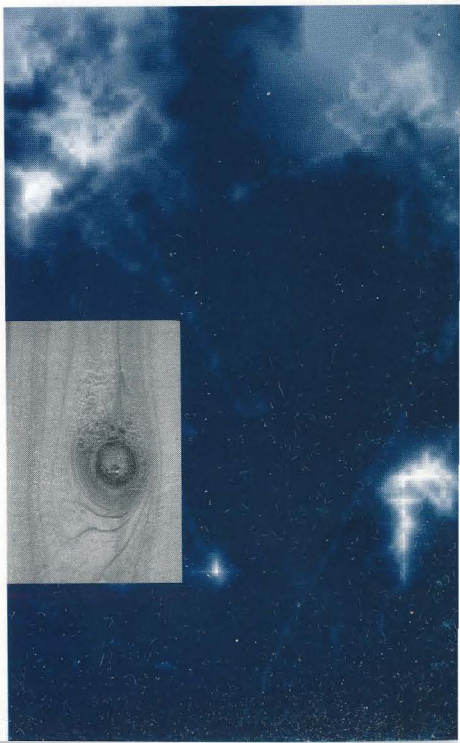
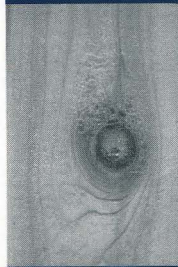




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B U L L E T I N



FAITH and THOUGHT

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Editorial

This issue contains an announcement about a new Essay Competition - with a rather intriguing title! We hope this might inspire some 'free spirits' to have a go. It is also noteworthy that two of the contributions this time are by members of the Council, albeit one being only the report of a meeting a year ago. This is mentioned to underline the desire we have for contributions from our readers. Please think about this, and respond. At least we have some correspondence and replies to your letters. We do need your help in keeping interest alive. Are there any younger readers 'out there' who could enliven our pages? We believe that science and faith relationships are very important and topical. If you feel this, let us hear from you.

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2. It should not exceed 7000 words, excluding documentation, typewritten, with double spacing and 2 cm margins.
3. It should be submitted to the administration office address below, accompanied by a brief synopsis of 200 words setting out which parts are claimed to be original, along with a sealed envelope with a motto or mark outside, and the author's name inside.
4. Entries will be professionally refereed and if the referees consider the prize should be divided between two authors, the trustees' decision will be final.
5. As an encouragement to young writers, candidates under 25 may add to their motto or mark the words, 'Under 25' or state their date of birth: neither will be published.
6. If no submissions are deemed worthy, the right to withhold the prize and to publicise another competition thereafter will be exercised.
7. The prize is normally awarded at the subsequent AGM - 9 October 2004.
8. Submission of an entry will indicate candidates' assent to all these conditions.

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Suffering and Hope: A Forum for Persecuted Religious Minorities

A.B. Robins

The events of 11 September 2001 have sharpened our awareness of the existence of extremism in many of the world's religions.

On 20 July 2002 a day conference was held at Partnership House, London - the base of the mission agencies CMS and USPG and the office of the Anglican Communion - to launch the *Christian Forum for Persecuted Religious Minorities*. The Forum itself is made up of Christian groups - but the 'minorities' with which it is concerned may be members of any religion - a point that was made strongly during the meeting. The organisations that currently make up the Forum are: the Barnabas Fund; Christians Aware; Christian Solidarity Worldwide; CMS; USPG; Coventry Cathedral.

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Bishop Mano Rumlshah of USPG (and formerly Bishop of Peshawar in Pakistan) spoke of how it had taken three years to establish the Forum. The day was chaired by Bishop Tom Butler of Southwark - and the first speaker was Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of Kaduna in Nigeria, where the relations between Christians and Muslims have been recently strained.

Tensions in Nigeria

Bishop Josiah spoke of how the 1963 Constitution of Nigeria allowed religious freedom in a supposedly secular state, and intermarriage between Christians and Muslims, for example, was common. But life has become much more difficult for Christians - particularly in the so-called 'middle belt' states between the largely Muslim north and Christian south. Islam there has become more radical with many Muslims feeling less bound by national laws, and observing Sharia law. In 1999 the election in Nigeria of a Christian President from the south incensed Muslims, and full Sharia law was imposed. 'Islam will never change or adapt,' said Bishop Josiah. 'It rules at all times, and in all places.' Now, three years later, husbands and wives cannot travel together, schools are shut because they are not teaching Islam, and churches are closed. In hospitals, even Christian nurses may be sacked for refusing to obey Sharia law, which is binding on all, not just Muslims. What can we do? Bishop Josiah replied, 'Speak out, listen to Nigerians, come and visit us, tell the UK politicians what is happening, and above all, pray to encourage the Christians there.'

The Indian Experience

The second speaker, Josphe De Souza, was representing the All-India Christian Council. He is a civil rights lawyer and spoke of the situation in Hyderabad in particular where there is a Hindu majority but a substantial Muslim minority and a smaller Christian one. India is formally a secular state, but in spite of this there is the rise of Hindu fundamentalism which shows itself in three ways. First by hate campaigns through the media - with minorities accused of being unpatriotic. Secondly, churches and places of worship of other minority faiths are being burned or attacked. Then thirdly, there are moves by some in the Indian Parliament to legislate that India 'has one religion, one people, one state' with permission to build places of worship for minority faith communities being withheld. Buddhism has become severely weakened and though there are tolerant strains of Hinduism, these are becoming rarer. This move to the right started 25 years before partition, but it is now gathering apace.

A Christian response

What can Christians do in the Indian situation? According to Joseph De Souza they need to protest against the situation - peacefully. Further, persecution forces

Christians to unite in a functional way, and many are finding new courage. Christianity has in the past brought much to India; women especially have been grateful for the freedoms that came with it. Many secular groups are joining in the protests. Christians may need to discover new ways of relating to people and expressing the values of God's Kingdom. For example, Christians have traditionally supported the efforts of Dalits (a downtrodden group within Hinduism, once known as 'untouchables') to improve their situation. In the past numbers of Dalits have converted to Christianity - but now many Dalits are protesting at the injustices imposed upon them by converting to Buddhism. What should be the Christian response if Dalits choose Buddhism over Christianity. How far should tolerance extend?

In the Indian state of Gujarat when Muslims were persecuted by Hindus, Christians were asked to help them and did so. The power of the 'Christian West' was acknowledged - and it was important that we used our influence wisely and well.

Other speakers also shared their experiences - from Pakistan, Israel/Palestine, Iran, Congo. One common factor emphasised seemed to be the need to build bridges at the grassroots level, and avoid spreading hate and discord.

Where do we go?

Workshops in the afternoon offered the following pointers:

- It was important to widen the Forum
- There was a requirement to offer practical as well as spiritual support to converts
- Consciousness-raising among MPs and in government was critical
- The Forum committed itself to take up the Dalit issue
- The need for the media to act responsibly vis-à-vis minorities was emphasised - particularly since 11 September.

In commissioning the Forum officially at the end of the day Bishop Tom Butler gave us a challenge based on the words of Revelation 4.7. The forum (and indeed the Church as a whole) needs the four faces described there: the lion for passion, the eagle with bifocal vision, the human with thoughtful love and the burden-bearing ox who is prepared to work continuously to effect change.

Truly a memorable day!

The Forum's website is: www.sufferingandhope.org

What is the Hebrew Language?

Terence C. Mitchell

In Medieval times it was assumed that the language spoken before the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) was Hebrew, and that this was therefore the original language of mankind.¹ This was a reasonable enough assumption at the time, but in the nineteenth century inscriptions were discovered which, once their unfamiliar script had been deciphered, were identified as Phoenician, and were found to preserve a form of language very similar to Hebrew. This showed that Hebrew itself was not a special religious language unlike any other, and this conclusion was supported by the discovery in 1868 of an inscribed stela known today as the Moabite (or Mesha) Stone (now in the Louvre in Paris). This was found at Diban, the site of ancient Dibon, the capital of Moab, the kingdom across the Jordan from Judah. It preserved a language even closer to Hebrew than that in the Phoenician inscriptions, and apparently of the same date as the Old Testament. It was, in fact, almost too good to be true because it mentioned the Israelite king Omri, written *'mry*, just as in the Old Testament (though without vowels), and also the name of the God of Israel, written *yhw*, again just as in the Old Testament.² Because of these details, the Moabite Stone was at first suspected of being a forgery, and there was lively discussion about it at the time, but there is now no serious doubt that it is genuine.³ These

¹ As stated, for instance, by Isodore of Seville (560-636 A.D.); see E. Vineis and A. Maierù in G. Lepschy, *History of Linguistics*, II, *Classical and Medieval Linguistics* (London, 1994), p. 156.

² This name (perhaps pronounced "Yahweh" in ancient times) is represented occasionally in some English versions as "Jehovah", but usually as "LORD" following the tradition in later Judaism that the divine name is too sacred to pronounce. In the AV, RV and NEB the form "Jehovah" is given in the important passages in Exodus 3:15 and 6:3 which refer to the way in which it was shown to Moses, but in the RSV and many later versions including NIV and English Standard Version this has been replaced in these verses by "Lord", though the ESV supplies an explanatory footnote. This approach is already evident in the Qumran texts where, for instance, *yhw* is sometimes written in the Archaic Hebrew script in texts otherwise in the Aramaic script. This may also have been in effect in the New Testament where the name does not appear, and God is referred to by the noun *kurtos*, "Lord", by the form used over 6000 times in the Septuagint for *yhw* (see G. Quell in G. Kittel [ed.]), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, III (Grand Rapids, 1966), pp. 1058-1059; with much data and discussion by Quell and W. Foerster on *kurtos*, pp. 1039-1095).

³ Introduction, text and translation and commentary in J.C.L. Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 1, *Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 71-83; and full discussion in J.A. Dearman (ed.), *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* (Atlanta, 1989).

Phoenician and Moabite inscriptions have been followed over the years by the discovery in Palestine of a considerable number of actual ancient Hebrew inscriptions, a few on stone, but many on ostraca (potsherds), including letters, ration lists and other documents of everyday life, showing a form of the language indistinguishable from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and demonstrating that Biblical Hebrew was a language in common use, and not limited to sacred texts.⁴

Alongside these discoveries the study of language in general (linguistics) has shown that all languages change over time,⁵ so any idea that Hebrew could have come down unchanged from what would today be called Prehistoric times has had to be abandoned. Changes over time can be seen within the Old Testament itself, where there are differences between the Hebrew used in the books written before and after the Babylonian Exile.⁶

It might be thought that among these related ancient languages, Hebrew was the fountain-head so to speak and that the Phoenicians, Moabites and others near to it borrowed their languages from the Hebrews. Further discoveries have shown, however, that Hebrew was, as indeed the Old Testament itself indicates (Isaiah 19:18, by implication), simply the language of Canaan. It is now seen as belonging to what is generally referred to as the Semitic family of languages which includes, mainly in the Near East, both ancient and modern, among others, Babylonian and Assyrian in the east, Arabic and Ethiopic in the south, and in the north-west the Canaanite group consisting of Phoenician, Hebrew, Moabite and some others only sparsely represented, and distinct from these Aramaic (a language found in parts of Ezra and Daniel) with its later representatives Nabataean, Palmyrene, Syriac etc. These are all related to one another in a way similar to those of the so-called Romance family: French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese etc.

Ancient languages can only be known from inscriptions, and since writing does not appear until a few centuries before 3000 B.C. in Mesopotamia and Egypt, nothing precise can be known about any language before that time. Comparison of related languages can, however, give clues to earlier forerunners, and it is now generally agreed that the Semitic languages go back, with ancient

⁴ Selection in Gibson, *Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1971)

⁵ See e.g. W.P. Lehmann, *Historical Linguistics* (3rd ed.; London, 1992), pp. 1-3

⁶ A. Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 68ff and 112ff respectively, cited in this form because at each reference the discussion soon becomes technical.

Egyptian and some others, to a common ancestor which is referred to as Hamito-Semitic or more recently Afro-Asiatic or Afrasian.⁷ Nevertheless, this kind of reconstruction could not carry the picture earlier than about the 5th millennium B.C., and there is abundant archaeological evidence of human settlement in the Near East long before that, so knowledge of the earliest language of mankind is well beyond our reach.

If Hebrew was simply a dialect of Canaanite, when did the Hebrews begin to speak it? The two main possibilities are that it was adopted: (a) by Abraham when he came into Canaan from Babylon by way of Syria some time after about 2000 B.C.; or (b) by Moses and the Israelites when they came to Canaan at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, probably in the 13th century B.C. Abraham had presumably spoken Babylonian when he was in Mesopotamia, and Moses would have spoken Egyptian, and possibly also Babylonian, when he was connected with the royal court in Egypt.

It is likely that already before 1000 B.C. there were regional dialects in the area of Syria-Palestine, and there is only very limited evidence indicating what they were like. There are some very short Phoenician inscriptions on arrowheads consisting mainly of personal names from the 12th and 11th centuries (the period of Joshua-Judges).⁸ What may be seen as Canaanite glosses (equivalents) of Babylonian words are found in cuneiform texts of the 14th century B.C. from el-Amarna in Egypt.⁹ More tenuous indications are found in West Semitic, if not precisely Canaanite, personal names mentioned in Egyptian documents of the 19th and 18th centuries B.C. known as Execration Texts, magical incantations against Asiatic enemies of Egypt.¹⁰ These give only very sparse glimpses of the situation, and it is likely that there were a number of regional dialects in the second millennium, and also presumably in the third millennium B.C. Personal names can be instructive because just as in English the name "Smith" is also a noun, so in ancient languages names often have in them elements such as Hebrew *ben* and Aramaic *bar*, "son", as found for example in "Benjamin" and "Barnabas".

⁷ See briefly Sáenz-Badillos, *History of the Hebrew Language*, pp.25-27 [and pp.27-28 on suggestions of relations between the Afrasian and Indo-European groups].

⁸ Written on arrow heads, see e.g. Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 3, *Phoenician Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 1-8; example in T.C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum* (London, 1998), no. 14.

⁹ J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, Parts 1-2 (Leiden, 1995), *passim*, designated "OldCan" (Old Canaanite, on which see I, p.x, where *Keil* refers to the cuneiform wedge which precedes a Canaanite gloss or translation in the text).

¹⁰ See briefly B. Mazar, *The Early Biblical Period. Historical Essays* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 9-10, 15-18.

As already mentioned, languages change over the centuries, so these very meagre hints can give little idea of what the language of Canaan was like in 2000 B.C.,¹¹ but on the analogy of English (Old English was very different from Modern English) it is likely to have differed considerably from that spoken in the 13th century B.C. The fact that Biblical Hebrew is so close to Moabite and Phoenician might suggest that it was adopted at the time of the Exodus and Conquest. It is possible, however, that Abraham had adopted the Canaanite language when he first came into the area, that the Patriarchs continued to speak it through their moves, and that it continued to be spoken by the Hebrews among themselves in Egypt. There is evidence of Canaanite speakers other than Hebrews in the Delta area of Egypt in the period leading up to the Exodus,¹² so if the Hebrews were speaking the form brought into Egypt at the time of Joseph, they might have become familiar with the, by then, somewhat different form spoken in Canaan. The fact that an old Canaanite month name, Abib, is used to define the date of the beginning of the Exodus (Exodus 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Deuteronomy 16:1),¹³ suggests familiarity with the Canaanite language at that stage, and the episode involving Rahab at Jericho (Joshua 2 and 6:22-25), which indicate that the spies were able to communicate without difficulty with the local people, could support this.

The evidence is not sufficient to decide between these two possibilities, but either way, it shows that, as was the case with the Greek of the New Testament, the Old Testament was written in a language which was in common use in the secular world of its time.

¹¹ See Z.S. Harris, *Development of the Canaanite Dialects* [American Oriental Series 16] (New Haven, 1939), pp. 2-3, 5; W.R. Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 1-6

¹² See K.A. Kitchen in D.N. Freedman (ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, I (New York, London etc., 1992), p. 704, D.1.b in the article "The Exodus".

¹³ Apart from three other Canaanite month names, Ethanim, Bul and Ziv, which occur in the account of the building of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6:1, 37-38; 8:2), the Hebrew months were referred to in the earlier parts of the Old Testament by numbers, and then from the 6th century onwards by Hebraised versions of the Babylonian names, Abib for instance being replaced by Nisan, representing the period March/April.

Religion, Science and a New World View

A meeting was held at Guy's Hospital, London on 2nd March 2002 under the above title . It was the twelfth "Mind and Brain Symposium", dealing with the science of consciousness, and under the aegis of the Scientific and Medical Network. (Previous meetings were reported in *Faith and Thought Bulletin*, No. 20, October 1996.

The chairman for the day was Dr. Peter Fenwick of the Maudsley Hospital, London, and he introduced the proceedings by reflecting upon the changes in our understanding of consciousness over the past centuries, from Butler in the 18th and Huxley in the 19th to Stent in the 20th century. Stent has suggested that there can be no molecular explanation of consciousness - the difficulty is always how to integrate the subjective (consciousness) and the objective (science).

The first speaker was Professor Chris Isham of Imperial College, London, who is a theoretical physicist. He led the meeting along the path of the contrast between physical reality - as we understand it from our senses - and quantum reality - which seems 'unreasonable'. In the former we are considering types of material, what properties they possess, how changes occur with time, etc. Is this realism, or merely the result of our instrumentation? Nonetheless, 'things are there', and we can measure them. What I measure is what is there, the way things 'are', the sheer tactility of being. But in the quantum world, it is utterly different. What I measure is *not* how things are - there is *nō* 'way things are'. The classical view is now challenged. We have relationships between 1) measurement, 2) intrinsic probability, 3) reduction of state, and 4) entanglement. To delineate this further, we have the probability of an event, measurement brings things into being, the reduction of state implies sharp changes in the system, and entanglement is how all this affects all of us. Professor Isham discussed these separately.

Firstly, **probability** is equivalent to a lack of specific knowledge. We cannot make perfect measurements, nor know precise values. In a way analogous to Schrödinger's cat example, we may plot a graph to show the probability of a 'quantum coin' and take the b-axis as 'heads' and the a-axis as 'tails'. All we know is that $a^2 + b^2 = 1$. The squares of the probabilities of heads or tails is 1. We may also use the angles between the probability line and the axes as θ , ϕ , in which case $\cos^2\theta + \cos^2\phi = 1$. When we have three values to consider this becomes $\cos^2\theta + \cos^2\phi + \cos^2\tau = 1$. It is tempting to say that probability means lack of knowledge, but more correct to say that our knowledge is statistically determined. We may keep on doing experiments to improve our experience of the material system, but ultimately measurement is outside the theory, and the theory itself can say nothing about a single system.

The second parameter was that of **reduction**. Whilst instrumentalism may be

all right for atoms, what is the situation in the total universe itself? The standard answer is heuristic, i.e. common sense, or experiential. Decoherence is satisfactory for small regions, but again, what of the universe? In the situations of 'many worlds' - often discussed - we have the co-existence of all possibilities, but with no observer. Non-linear theory then predicts reductions in complexity such that embarrassing super-positions cannot occur. Is this where consciousness could be predicated? Could we say that it is outside physical reality, but inside quantum theory?

Then, as regards **entanglement** in classical interactions we appreciate that two people may be happy or sad, and so affect each other. But in quantum terms we could have an individual who is in an 'in-between' state, which may entangle others also. The result is that there are *no* individuals and all are entangled. A conscious individual *could* prevent becoming entangled, even instantaneously, and at some distance away.

Several comments were made as a result of Professor Isham's talk, as questions or suggestions. For example, in psychology, we define something by what it does - an operational definition - but in quantum terms repeated investigation leads to no improvement in knowledge. Are we entitled to talk of large bodies then, and not merely paired particles. Maybe yes, maybe no. A question was asked about mediums and their supposed contact with the deceased. Does quantum theory apply in the 'next world'? Possibly not. Dr. Fenwick enquired whether consciousness survives death, or does it die with the brain? This is an impossible question to answer, and indeed we may be making category errors here, and falsely extrapolating. Then, entanglement - how does this fit in with entropy? this could be appropriate when we consider interaction between observer and observed.

The second speaker, Chris Clarke, is Emeritus Professor of Southampton University, and entitled his address 'Science, Consciousness and the World View'. The talk was aimed as a response to the first talk, and an attempt to develop further the implications of Quantum theory for a non-realist world view. A list of publications supplied by the speaker is appended to the end of the whole discussion. In particular, Chris Clarke has developed the 'histories interpretation' of a sequence of events in space-time, as decoherence tells us the probability of the whole sequence of manifestations. Special relativity deals with the system of three dimensions of space coupled with one dimension of time, but this can be reduced to a single dimension when we study moments at different times. Different parts of the universe may exist in different regions of space-time. Could consciousness help us to understand these conditions, and make predictions? Again, where is the division between the macro- and the micro- world, and what happens when we make repeated measurements of a system? (This has been

discussed in the previous paper.) There are many intriguing questions to be answered; the following is a brief resumé of the relation between philosophy and consciousness studies.

The inheritance from Cartesian thought suggests that we are souls imprisoned within bodies, which is dualism and largely discounted today. The pineal gland was once thought to be the seat of the soul, but as knowledge grew so did the role of the soul decrease. But, it was argued, if there is no soul, can there be any awareness? What does consciousness do? Maybe this is the wrong starting point. Nagel asked the question 'what is it like to *be*?' Velmans talks of 'being aware of things', and Chalmers calls it the 'hard problem'. It is generally agreed that consciousness is *not* the ability to do things (which is 'mechanical'), but experiencing what it is like to be in 'that state' (rather than another). Phenomenologically speaking we are dealing with a subjective experience whereas the whole world of science is built upon a system as directly experienced (see Merleau and Ponty). So what is the link with quantum theory, and can we *have* objectivity? Interpersonal agreements deal in *public* facts, but dialogue encounter is more of an 'I - thou' relationship. How do we move from a first-person experience to third-person objectivity and can we make the link via second-person encounter (I - thou)? The objective world is a distillation of individual, subjective worlds, each drawing on its own being. If we could combine third-person and first-person perspectives we could have a complementary description of the universe. Some suggestions can be made as to future research viz: the science of subjectivity, working out the correspondence between subjective and objective worlds, linking new logics from psychology with quantum logic, and also whether, and how, it affects the probability interpretation to determine *which* events are conscious (Mae-Wan Ho). We know from the quantum physical world that there is a dialogue even between elementary particles.

There followed a dialogue between the first two speakers; for instance, over the question of whether we are working towards the 'betterment of the world' - a Royal Society aim. Chris Clarke claimed that for him this was a *sine qua non*. We must enlarge our consciousness towards our world. A second point was over the matter of altered states of consciousness. Are these relevant? Yes, was the unequivocal answer. Again, can the I - thou relationship really be objective? Maybe we need large numbers of observations to answer this - perhaps thousands. A final question, thrown out but left unanswered was: if we claim that all energy is consciousness, is consciousness everywhere in the universe?

The third speaker, Keith Ward, is Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. His address was 'Integrating Subjectivity into a Scientific World View'. Today we have moved from the logical-positivist position of the 1950's which was anti-scientific in that it claimed that only sense experiences were important, to less

empirical stage now. Was there then no spirituality in the 1950's? For Bertrand Russell the nearest thing to spirituality was mathematics. Nowadays we have a 'neo-materialism' exemplified by Dennet, *et al.* No experiences exist - we only imagine they do. So what is the difference between religion and spirituality? The speaker spent some time on this question. Religion is about dimensions which are *not* sense-based, and this is true of the Judaeo-Islam-Christian viewpoint. This is one view and many reject it, and it is often misunderstood. The universe cannot be equated with God, but to the Indian, 'God' is not an important word. For the Brahmin the central issue is absolute, spiritual reality - not a personal reality, but one which includes the whole universe. For the Buddhist Chinese there is no personal relationship, and the way to heaven, Nirvana, is supreme bliss, knowledge and compassion, the abnegation of the physical. These attitudes seem similar, but only the Semitic viewpoint makes religion a personal encounter. In Greek philosophy Plato disdained the Greek gods, except for the 'good'. There is a possibility that we may recover goodness, wisdom, compassion and bliss. Today we know more about religions than ever before, and therefore we have no excuse for ignorance. There has, moreover, been a complete revolution in science, which has revealed an abyss of ignorance. The whole global, spiritual scene must be taken into account today, and it appears that scientists are proving more humble than once they were. But we must challenge our view of the universe and take every spiritual tradition seriously, with respect, and take science on board also. We need open-mindedness. Most religions agree on fundamental values. Classical physics cannot deal with values, as Descartes found, and there is no consciousness in the classical viewpoint. Philosophers have attempted to become interested, but usually they do not understand the physics. Consciousness, has to be a development. The mathematician Whitehead developed 'process reality', and acknowledged that although not everything is conscious, there are lower layers - perhaps even at particle level. Kant suggested that what we sense is only the appearance of reality. Maybe quantum mechanics could fit in here.

To turn to spirituality, this is often conditioned by our culture, and who we are. People have differing sensibilities, for example towards prayer, meditation and the like. Religion is a matter of perception, and although prayer and meditation etc. are counter-intuitive to common-sense, nonetheless they are important. Is there any analogy with quantum mechanics here?

One or two questions were asked, namely, can't God break in sometimes? Yes, of course He can. Are religious views testable? Can they lead to harm? What of creativity? These are fields for exploration.

The final speaker was the Revd. John Kerr who teaches philosophy, logic and theology at Winchester College. His talk was 'The View from Nowhere' and his aim was to concentrate on scientific creativity and theory construction. It has

never been possible to constrain entities such as Newton's absolute time and space, infinity, eternity etc. within a rigorous scientific framework that is objective. Scientists do transcend reality; they are not merely reductionist. It is instructive to give students something to 'play with', such as equations - to be creative. This may well be untidy but clearing-up can follow later. Like art, experience comes first, although to build upon it and use it needs a prepared mind. The Royal Society has a new course on the History and Philosophy of Science which is more open-minded than previously. However, there is a limit to religious experimentation. Are theories sometimes just guesses? In the end we must be constrained by experience and testing. It cannot be that 'anything goes' in spirituality, and we need experimental checks.

With regard to the cultural content of science, it is true that some cultures are inimical to science - 'matter matters' one might say. Whereas science preserves this, the church could lose it. There is no such thing as pure, culture-free science, and one remembers instances such as the abuse of genetics in Nazi Germany.

With regard to experiences such as timelessness, spacelessness and 'eureka moments', where do these originate? Is this consciousness? Finally, cross-fertilisation is essential in science, and one thinks of how Newton was helped in his thinking by the Cambridge platonists.

In a final discussion and dialogue, a few more thoughts emerged, and a few questions. Mathematics could be a way into reality, but it is largely hidden from most of the human race. Is this also true of religion? There has been concern about technologies which may alter mind-states, and this can also be true in religious circles. Even the desert fathers were affected by their isolation, and some experiences may be more harmful than helpful. A final word from Keith Ward suggested that whereas religion deals with imperfect (sinful) people, the institution itself could often be sinful (the church). Perhaps this was a sober note on which to end.

Apart from the detailed list of further reading supplied by Chris Clarke, the Editor would like to draw readers' attention to the issue of *Scientific American* dated summer 2002, and entitled 'The Hidden Mind'. This is a special issue and not dated by month. If anyone wishes to borrow this, please contact the Editor.

A.B. Robins (Ed.)

Religion, Science and a New World View - March 2, 2002

Science, Consciousness and World-View by Chris J S Clarke

References

Relevant parts of my own work are:

“Construction and reality: reflections on philosophy and spiritual/psychotic experience”, in *Psychosis and Spirituality: Exploring the New Frontier*, edited by Isabel Clarke, London: Whurr, 2001, pp 143-162

“The histories interpretation of quantum theory and the problem of human/divine action” in *Quantum Mechanics: Scientific Perspective on Divine Action*, edited by Robert John Russell, Philip Clayton, Kirk Wegter-McNelly and John Polkinghorne, Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory; Berkely, Calif.: Center for Theology and Natural Sciences, 2001, pp. 159-178.

“The histories interpretation: stability instead of consistency?” *Foundations of Physics Letters*, March 2001

“Consciousness and non-hierarchical physics” in *The physical nature of consciousness*, edited by Philip van Looke, Amsterdam: Jon Benjamins Publishing, 2001, pp 191-217

(With Isabel Clarke) “The primacy of connectivity”, *Network*, Issue 76, Aug 2001, pp 4-6

All the above are available on my web site, www.scispirit.com

Also *The Missing Face*, a book currently seeking publication, is available for comments in preliminary draft form at www.scispirit.com/book/ or in CD-ROM form from me, chris@scispirit.com

Other relevant references:

An introduction to phenomenology and its spiritual significance

Abram, David, *The spell of the sensuous*. New York: Random House 1997

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Hartle, James, “The Quantum Mechanics of Cosmology” in *Quantum Cosmology and Baby Universes*, edited by S. Coleman, P. Hartle, T. Piran and S. Weinberg, Singapore: World Scientific, 1991

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Correspondence

Dear Dr. Robins,

I am writing to express my whole-hearted agreement with the main points made by the Rev. J.E. Hollins in his letter published in *Faith and Thought*, number 32. When I first joined the Victoria Institute many years ago, I understood that its aim was to defend the Word of God against attacks by evolutionists. Now I have become increasingly irritated by the anti-creational stance of *Science & Christian Belief*.

Yours sincerely,

Frank J. Peachey, MRSC

Editor's reply:

Dear Mr. Peachey,

Thank you for your letter of support for the views of the Revd Hollins (*Faith and Thought* Bulletin 32). There is a reply to Hollins in this issue, and I would also like to draw to your attention the Constitution of the Victoria Institute which we still abide by, and which is published below. I hope this will clarify our position. I imagine *Science & Christian Belief* takes a similar position.

Yours sincerely,

A.B. Robins (Ed)

The Constitution

Adopted at the first annual General Meeting of the Members and Associates, May 27th, 1867, with Revisions of 1874-75, 1910, 1912, 1920, 1938, 1939, 1952, 1967 and 1979.

1. *Objects*

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE, or PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN, was established in 1865 for the following objects: viz:-

First To investigate fully and impartially the most important questions of Philosophy and Science, but more especially those that bear upon the great truths revealed in Holy Scripture: with the view of reconciling any apparent discrepancies between Christianity and Science.

Second To associate together men of science and authors who have already been engaged in such investigations, and all others who may be interested in them, in order to strengthen their efforts by association; and, by bringing together the results of such labours, after full discussion, in the printed Transactions of an Institution to give greater force and influence to proofs and arguments which might be little known, or even disregarded, if put forward by mere individuals.

Third to consider the mutual bearings of the various scientific conclusions arrived at in the several distinct branches into which Science is now divided, in order to get rid of contradictions and conflicting hypotheses, and thus promote the real advancement of true science: and to examine and discuss all supposed scientific results with reference to final causes, and the more comprehensive and fundamental principles of Philosophy proper, based upon faith in the existence of one Eternal God, who, in his wisdom, created all things very good.

Fourth To publish papers read before the society in furtherance of the above objects, along with

full reports of the discussions thereon, in the form of a Journal, or as the Transactions of the Institute.

Fifth When subjects have been fully discussed, to make the results known by means of Lectures of a more popular kind, and to publish such Lectures.

Sixth To publish English translations of important foreign works of real scientific and philosophical value, especially those bearing upon the relation between the Scriptures and Science: and to cooperate with other philosophical societies at home and abroad, which are now or may hereafter be formed, in the interest of Scriptural truth and of real science, and generally in furtherance of the objects of this Society.

To the Editor, *Faith and Thought* Bulletin

Dear Sir,

The letter from Rev. J.E. Hollins highlights the present confused state of the creation/evolution debate. He praises the writings of R.E.D. Clark who was an old-earth creationist and accepted species evolution over millions of years of geological time.¹ Yet at the same time Hollins admits that he has been greatly encouraged by the writings of John Rendle Short who holds diametrically opposite views and believes that the earth is no more than 10,000 years old and that the fossils were laid down after Noah's flood.

Hollins asks us to accept a 'clearly understood' and 'straightforwardly true' Bible. This is the mantra of young-earth creationists who equate literality with truth and urge us to interpret the days of Genesis 1 as literal days of real-time creation rather than human time frames within which God revealed His creative activity which occurred over millions of years.

I share Hollins's concern that theistic evolutionists seem unable to give serious credit to anti-evolutionary evidence. But this arises from the fact that following the publication of Whitcomb and Morris's book *The Genesis Flood* in 1961, the anti-evolution movements have been taken over by young-earth creationists who, while providing excellent evidence against major evolution, insist that we must also accept their unscientific and bizarre interpretation of the fossil record. If valid anti-evolutionist arguments are presented together with dogmas of a young earth then inevitably the case for creation will be seriously weakened.

The pioneer *Evolution Protest Movement* was founded more than 60 years ago by old-earth creationists such as Douglas Dewar²⁻⁴ who had a deep understanding of the fossil record and accepted that the evidence favoured creation of the major categories (the 'kinds' of Genesis 1) which were then modified by evolutionary change. This meant that the early debates were centred around the question of the relative importance of evolution and creation, and on this basis it was possible to conduct profitable debates between creationists and Darwinian evolutionists.⁵ In today's climate however, we have sterile confrontations between young-earth creationists and Darwinists, the latter viewing their opponents as

peddlers of a mixture of myth and fraudulent science. The tragedy of this situation is that, by insisting that theirs is the only valid interpretation of the Genesis record, young-earth creationists are convincing the majority of earth scientists that the Bible is not to be trusted.

A number of more recent books dealing with the age of the earth and the harmonisation of the Genesis record and the fossil record is appended in the bibliography.⁶⁻⁸

Yours sincerely,

Alan Fowler

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Cumulative Index Part 4

The first part of this index was published in Bulletin 27 (April 2000) and covers volumes 1 to 43 (1866 to 1912); Part 2 (Bulletin 28) volumes 44 to 70 (1912 to 1938); Part 3 (Bulletin 29 - 31) volumes 71 to 100 (1939 to 1973). Part 4, which now follows, covers volumes 101 to 105 (1974 - 1978)

Abbreviations

Asterisk (*) - the first page of an article; **c** - correspondence; **d** - contribution to a discussion; **f** - and pages following; **r** - review; **rw** - writer of a review.

To save space titles of papers and headings are indexed under key words only and not given in full. Also '10' is omitted in volume numbers: e.g. **3-107** indicated volume 103 page 107.

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PUBLICATIONS

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Journal of the Transactions of The Victoria Institute	1-89	1957
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